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A N
A C C O U N T
OF THE LATE
Dr. GOLDSMITH'S ILLNESS,
SO FAR AS RELATES TO THE
E X H I B I T I O N
O F
Dr. J A M E S ' s P O W D E R S :
TOGETHER WITH
REMARKS on the USE and ABUSE of POWERFUL
MEDICINES in the beginning of ACUTE DISEASES.

By WILLIAM HAWES, APOTHECARY.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXIV.



T O
Sir JOSHUA REYNOLDS,
A N D
EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

GENTLEMEN,

TH E death of a Man so much distinguished
in the Republic of Letters as my late much-
valued friend Dr. GOLDSMITH, must naturally attract
the notice of the World ; and as there were some
circumstances attending that unhappy event, which
seem proper to be made generally known, I have
presumed to lay them before the Public.

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AFTER

D E D I C A T I O N.

AFTER the Doctor's decease, you were pleased to honour me with the management of his affairs, till the person should appear, who was authorized to administer to his effects; and I flatter myself that I have faithfully executed your intention. But as the Public are interested in the loss of a man so conspicuous for his talents, and his humanity, as the late Dr. GOLDSMITH, they become naturally anxious to know the circumstances of his illness and death. This has induced many Gentlemen, who knew that I had attended him, to apply to me for information on the subject. I have, accordingly, readily related to them the particulars which came within my knowledge; but having been also applied to in the News-papers, as well as by private letter, I have thought it best to publish this little Pamphlet; and the rather, as I have reason to believe some persons have formed very unjust and uncandid notions respecting my conduct in this affair; and it is therefore presumed, that these considerations

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considerations will sufficiently apologize for this Publication.

ALL that is reasonable to expect from me, is a fair detail of the circumstances with which this Case was attended. I have attempted little more than this ; and it is hoped, that what is here offered to the Public, will prove as satisfactory to my readers in general, as it has done to many of Dr. GOLDSMITH's acquaintance ; to whom I appeal, whether I have not uniformly advanced the same particulars in private, which I have now thought it expedient to publish to the world.

THE event which gave rise to this Pamphlet, hath given a very sincere concern to me, as well as to many others. I am, however, willing to take this opportunity of expressing the great respect which I have for you, Gentlemen, to whom, with your permission, I have taken the liberty of addressing this Dedication. I am happy in having
my

D E D I C A T I O N.

my conduct approved by two of Dr. GOLDSMITH's most intimate and respectable friends ; both of whom have deservedly attained to a very high degree of reputation : the one, as the first Painter of the present age ; while the other is universally celebrated as an upright Senator, and most accomplished Orator.

I am, Gentlemen,

With the greatest regard,

Your most obedient humble servant,

April 25, 1774.

WILLIAM HAWES.

A N

A N
A C C O U N T, &c.

AS the observations which I have made in the Dedication prefixed to this piece, will sufficiently account for its design, I shall begin my narrative without any further apology.

ON Friday the twenty-fifth of March, at eleven o'clock at night, the late Dr. GOLDSMITH sent for me to his Chambers. He complained of a violent pain extending all over the forepart of his head ; his tongue was moist ; he had no cold shiverings or pain in any other part, and his pulse beat about ninety strokes in a minute. He then told me he had taken two ounces of Ipecacuanha wine as a vomit, and that it was his intention to take *Dr. James's Fever-Powders*. I replied, that in my opinion this was a medicine very improper at that time, and begged

he would not think of it : but I am sorry to say, that every argument used, seemed only to render him more determined in his own opinion ; which gave me much concern, as I could not avoid thinking, that the man whom I had all the reason in the world to esteem, was about to take a step which might prove extremely injurious to him. I, therefore, endeavoured to reason medically with him, and observed, that his complaint appeared to be more a nervous affection than a febrile disease. He said, “ he thought so too.” I replied, “ Then, “ Sir, as you have already taken a vomit, which has operated “ very well, I would advise you to take a gentle opiate, which “ may be a means of quieting the stomach ; as after the operation of an emetic it generally produces for a few hours “ refreshing sleep ; after which, in all probability, the complaint in the head will gradually go off, as repeated experience has confirmed.” To this he answered, “ I like your “ mode of reasoning well ;” and for a short time he appeared to be convinced, but soon after insisted upon taking the *Powder*. I now found myself in a more disagreeable situation, than can easily be conceived by any person whatever, except a Brother-Practitioner : for with great concern I speak it, the more we endeavour to convince, the more our good intentions are too frequently treated with disregard ; and I

solemnly

solemnly declare, that I felt at that time more anguish of mind than I had done in fifteen years preceding practice. And this for three reasons : First, the consequence of this patient's health and life to his friends and society : Secondly, the desire which every Practitioner has, or ought to have, of doing good when consulted ; at least not suffering his patient to do himself an injury : Thirdly, from the real friendship I entertained for the Doctor, on the principles of gratitude for his countenance towards an Undertaking, which I have for a considerable time endeavoured to establish in this kingdom, and which, by the assistance of a worthy and able physician, and the favour of the Public, is now likely to take place. For these reasons, I could not take my leave without again endeavouring to convince him : and tho' some of the Faculty may perhaps smile at me for theorizing (to which they have my full consent), I now pursued that plan ; and as I had before surmounted his objections, in preceding complaints, by entering a little minutely into the progress of diseases, and the action of medicines on the human body, I hoped it would prove successful in the present instance. I told the Doctor, that his stomach was yet hardly settled from the operation of the emetic, and that his frame in general seemed a good deal agitated ; and therefore the *Fever-Powder* would

would be more likely to act as a simple stimulant on the primæ viæ than as a febrifuge, and thus be a means of reproducing the vomiting in a very violent degree, or induce a purging; and that if it acted upon either stomach or intestines, it might in the end be productive of the most serious consequences.

HOWEVER, tho' I reasoned with him on the subject, for near half an hour, by his bed-side, and vehemently entreated him not to take *Dr. James's Powders*, yet I could not prevail upon him to say that he would not.—At last I addressed him, to the best of my remembrance, in the following manner, “ Please, Sir, to observe, that if you do take the *Fever-Powder*, it is entirely without my approbation ; and at the same time remember, how very anxious I have been to persuade you to desist from it : and now I will take my leave, if you will be kind enough to grant me one request.” He very warmly asked me, what that was ? I told him, that as he had always consulted Dr. Fordyce in preceding illnesses, and had expressed the greatest opinion of his abilities as a physician, I hoped he would permit me to send for him. It was full a quarter of an hour before I could obtain his consent to this, as the taking *Dr. James's Powders* appeared to be the only object which employed his attention ; and even then he endeavoured

endeavoured to throw an obstacle in my way, by saying, that Dr. Fordyce was gone to spend the evening in Gerrard-street, “ where, adds he, I should also have been, if I had not been “ indisposed.” I told him, that the distance was a matter of no consequence, and that if he would permit it, my man should immediately be sent for him. He replied, “ Well, you may “ send for him, if you will.” I frankly declare, that this last sentence was the most agreeable to me, of any that he had uttered during my stay with him. I then came home, and immediately wrote a note to Dr. Fordyce, and dispatched my servant, with orders first to call in Essex-street, and enquire whether he was returned ; and if not at home, to proceed to Gerrard-street. Fortunately, the messenger found him at home, who sent me word that he would wait on Dr. GOLDSMITH directly.

As I did not attend at the same time with Dr. Fordyce, I am ignorant of the conversation that passed during his visit ; but it was evident that he did not approve of the *Fever-Powder*, as he prescribed other medicines. And, indeed, early the next morning the Doctor called at my house, and informed me, that he had represented to Dr. GOLDSMITH the preceding night, the impropriety there would be in his taking

Dr. James's Powders ; but that instead of paying any attention to his remonstrances on this subject, he had unhappily persisted in his own resolution, and taken two or three doses of the *Powder*, tho' it had operated both as a purgative and an emetic.

WHEN I called to see him on Saturday morning (the twenty-sixth of March) Dr. GOLDSMITH's servant told me, he believed his master was dozing, as he lay very quiet. I then said, I would call in the evening; which I accordingly did, and his man, with great appearance of concern, when I asked him how his master was, replied he was very bad, for he had been vomiting all day, and had had a great many loose stools; notwithstanding which, the servant observed, the Doctor would make him give him *James's Fever-Powders*; so that he still continued the use of the medicine, and of consequence it increased in its pernicious operation, by which means the evacuations were continued for at least eighteen hours. I afterwards went into Dr. GOLDSMITH's chamber, and found him extremely reduced, and his pulse was now become very quick and small. When I enquired of him how he did, he sighed deeply, and in a very low voice said, “ he
“ wished he had taken my friendly advice last night” (meaning
Friday

Friday night, the twenty-fifth of March) : and this was all he said during this visit ; for whatever other questions I thought proper to ask him, he appeared so much exhausted as not to be able to make any reply to them ; and I clearly perceived he was so very weak and low, from the large and copious evacuation, that he seemed to have neither strength nor spirits to speak.

As Dr. Fordyce had visited him a little before my attendance on him at this time, I thought it unnecessary to trouble him to make a reply to many enquiries : accordingly I took my leave ; at the same time being firmly convinced in my own mind, that every bad consequence was to be expected from the violent operation of this medicine.

I WAS very soon too well confirmed in my opinion by Dr. Fordyce's calling upon me at my house, and acquainting me with much regret, that Dr. GOLDSMITH by taking *Dr. James's Powders* had done himself so much injury, that he thought it right to propose calling in another Physician, as he would not follow his advice ; in hopes that by so doing, the patient would be convinced of the danger of his situation, and consequently be more inclined to conform to the mode

mode of treatment prescribed. Dr. Fordyce said, he knew that Dr. GOLDSMITH had a great opinion of Dr. Turton; and desired I would go very early in the morning, and if I found him no better, to persuade him to call in that Gentleman. At eight o'clock, the next morning, I went, and found him much worse. He had passed a very bad night, having vomited several times, and had many loose stools; he lay absolutely sunk with weakness; and I was so very clear respecting the exceeding bad situation he was in, that instead of fatiguing him with any questions, I immediately exerted my utmost endeavours to persuade him to send for Dr. Turton; to which he (being now, tho' too late, convinced of his unfortunate mode of proceeding) very readily consented, and desired me to order his servant to go directly. I accordingly did, and the Doctors Fordyce and Turton met at the time appointed, to assist at a consultation, which was continued twice a day till his death.

As the symptoms which arose afterwards in the disease, were noticed with the utmost accuracy by the able Physicians who attended him, they do not come within my province; I have only endeavoured to give the Public a clear and concise account of the mischievous effects the *Fever-Powders* produced in the
before

before recited case; and am deeply concerned when I consider that they have, by an injudicious application, been productive of the loss of a life so valuable, and so important to Society.

I HOPE it will not here be deemed impertinent in an Apothecary to declare, that in the course of his business, he has had the opportunity of seeing several Cases wherein this noted *Fever-Powder* has proved highly injurious; which must generally be the consequence when an Antimonial Medicine, very violent frequently in its operation, has become so universally fashionable, as to be administered in almost all feverish complaints, and in all stages of fevers, and too often suffered to be given at the discretion of Old Women, or, at least, by those who cannot have the smallest pretensions to medical knowledge. *

AT the same time it would be a proof of the greatest want of candour not to acknowledge, that much good has arisen from the proper and skilful exhibition of *Dr. James's Powders*, in many cases of fevers. From these considerations I am firmly of opinion, that these *Powders*, or indeed any other

* Since the above was written, I have read some very ingenious remarks relative to *Dr. James's Fever-Powder*, in a Pamphlet entitled, "Observations on Antimony," read before the Medical Society of London, by John Miller, M. D. which have confirmed me in my opinion on this subject.

very powerful and active medicines, should never be taken in any acute disease, but by the advice and direction of a Physician, or in his absence an Apothecary.

As a confirmation of what I have advanced, I refer to the practice of Dr. James himself, who always administers his *Fever-Powders* with great caution and circumspection, and desists from the exhibition of them, when he finds them not operate in the manner he wished or expected. Is it then proper to trust a remedy frequently so very powerful in its operation, in the hands of the unskilful, who are incapable of forming a proper judgment either of its good or bad effects?

I WILL here beg leave to lay before the Public, a circumstance which has happened more than once within my practice, and which, I doubt not, has likewise occurred to many of my brethren: A Gentleman whom I had been used to attend for some years, sent for me after he had been ill two days, and informed me, that he had taken *Dr. James's Fever-Powders* without finding himself any thing the better; some of the doses having caused him to vomit and purge violently, whilst others had a different effect. His servant, being an attentive man, brought me the remaining papers to
look

look at, which I put in my pocket, and weighed, as soon as I came home : one weighed three, another four, and the third upwards of six grains. Now, as much depends on the exhibition of a proper quantity of this remedy, and even with that advantage its action is extremely uncertain, every reasonable man must be convinced, that administering a medicine so powerful as these *Fever-Powders* are in so irregular a manner, must often be productive of the most serious consequences.

I WISH to remove the film of prejudice from the eyes of the Public, and to make them see clearly the great impropriety there is in indiscriminately taking this or any other powerful medicinal preparation, without the previous advice of a person qualified to direct its exhibition : and I do affirm, that if this caution were more attended to than it generally is, much uneasiness would be prevented in slight complaints, and the danger frequently avoided in those of a more serious nature.

I HOPE the Public will be convinced, that in the relation of the unfortunate case of the late much-respected Dr. GOLDSMITH, I have no other design than to give them a just representation of the affair, and to convince them,

them, that my conduct therein has been irreproachable : and as a proof of my sincere desire to render myself beneficial to mankind, and the present unfortunate case seeming to afford me a proper opportunity, I will take the liberty of laying down a few plain rules, which I hope will have a due attention paid to them by my readers.

FIRST, To those who are prepossessed in favour of *Dr. James's Fever-Powder*, and take or prescribe it in too indiscriminate a manner, I would earnestly recommend to keep Apothecaries scales and weights by them, and whilst they are in health, weigh it out in proper proportions, according to the effects they wish it should produce, and have each parcel of the same weight wrapped up, and the quantity contained therein wrote on the outside* : or if proper scales and weights cannot be readily obtained, to send the *Powders* to a neighbouring Apothecary, and mention in writing (not by a verbal message by servants, in a circumstance of so much importance) the quantities to be weighed out. Many Gentlemen of the Temple, &c. whom I have

* The above rule may to some persons appear trifling ; but they will perhaps change their opinion when they are informed, that it is an undoubted fact, that many keep *Dr. James's Fever-Powders* constantly by them when in health, in order to make use of when they are occasionally taken ill.

not had the pleasure of knowing, have been so thoroughly convinced of the necessity of this caution, that they have applied to me to have DR. JAMES'S FEVER-POWDERS properly divided; which I always performed with the utmost willingness, and do not in the least doubt, but that my Brother-Apothecaries, in a matter of so much importance as the use of this very powerful medicine, will be equally ready, when application is made to them, to comply with a request of this kind.

SECONDLY, In a case of so much importance as the recovery of health, no person should depend too much upon their own judgment; or, what is still worse, implicitly rely on the judgment of such of his acquaintance who may accidentally drop in to visit him; and who, from being engaged in pursuits of a different nature, cannot be supposed to be possessed of medical knowledge. I have frequently, after reasoning with my patient, perhaps my friend, upon a subject so important as the use or abuse of *Dr. James's Fever-Powders*, been silenced by the arrival of an acquaintance, who finding his friend's indisposition to be a feverish complaint, has immediately advised the taking of these active powders, without asking any previous question whatever, which might

lead to a knowledge of the propriety or impropriety of such advice. And here I cannot avoid making one additional remark, which is, That when a medicine, potent in its operation, is once taken, the die is cast. The natural consequences of the preparation, whether beneficial or pernicious, will inevitably follow ; and that friend or acquaintance whose officious tendernefs has led him to recommend (for want of an adequate degree of knowledge) an improper medicine, cannot, after it has once been administered, prevent or counteract its effects, however dangerous or fatal. He cannot then check those incessant vomitings, purgings, and other increased secretions, which the *Fever Powder* too frequently produces ; nor can he restore the muscular and vascular strength, when reduced to the lowest ebb by the violent operation of this, or any other powerful medicine. I am the rather induced to make this observation, *from the present reigning propensity to quackery*, which has been excited by the numerous advertisements of NOSTRUMS, (the productions of artful, interested, and often ignorant men) which perpetually appear in the News-papers, as well as by hand-bills offered us in the public streets, to the disgrace of our police ; and by which means the unwary, as well as the too credulous wealthy people

people in this country, are most essentially, and sometimes fatally injured.

THIRDLY, I could wish it were possible (for the writer, tho' a person of no great consequence in life, has the most friendly dispositions to all mankind) to persuade the generality of people, and more particularly those of rank or opulence, who are apt to be the most impatient when attacked with any disorder, TO HAVE A LITTLE MORE PATIENCE AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF A DISEASE; and tho' they should be seized with a violent head-ach, pain in their limbs, heat, and other febrile symptoms; or, indeed, the symptoms of any acute disease, whether topical or general Inflammations, Rheumatic Fever, &c. not too precipitately to apply (expecting immediate ease and relief) to *Dr. James's Powders*, or any other very powerful active medicine; for altho' these symptoms may be extremely disagreeable to bear, yet a very short time has often produced a total freedom from this uneasy situation; and I dare say that every Practitioner, as well as myself, has seen innumerable instances, particularly in feverish attacks, wherein by going to bed, and drinking two or three half pints of warm Mountain-whey, or other warm diluting liquors,

liquors, a kindly sweat has broken out in an hour or two, which excretion has carried off all the symptoms that produced such strong apprehensions in the person taken ill; and I will venture to affirm, that greater numbers have done well at the beginning of Fevers, and other acute diseases, by acting in the above manner, than by taking *Dr. James's Powders*; tho' the Publick Ledger does indeed inform us, almost every day, that this celebrated Nostrum "will generally cure a Fever in a few hours, tho' attended with every bad symptom." But I will take upon me to assert, that many persons, by attending to the above precautions, have immediately put a stop to the disease, and thereby prevented those dangerous consequences which were to be apprehended from it; whereas, if they had taken the FEVER-POWDERS, or indeed any other very powerful medicine, they would have so much interrupted *Nature* in the course of her operations, as to prevent her giving her kind assistance in the further progress of the disorder: and I am certain, that the injudicious application of potent remedies, at the beginning of diseases, has not only been productive of long and tedious illnesses, but has too frequently occasioned the loss of a truly valuable life to the community*. For it is an indisputable

* Dr. Miller, in the Pamphlet before referred to, has the following observations relative to the use of *Dr. James's Fever-Powder*. "In the course," says he, "of more
" than

axiom, that whenever powerful means are administered, if the consequences are not beneficial, they must be exceedingly pernicious, and perhaps fatal and irreparable.

PRINCIPIIS OBSTA is an excellent maxim, and what I would recommend to every one ; take care in the beginning of a disorder, and you will nine times out of ten save yourself the trouble of applying to any powerful Nostrum whatever ; for it frequently happens that when the disease has obtained full possession, *serò medicina paratur.*

THE desire I have to warn mankind against the fatal effects produced by the indiscriminate exhibition of various potent

“ than twenty years practice, though I have never prescribed this medicine, yet I have
 “ not, after fairly declaring my opinion, opposed its being given when desired by the
 “ sick or their relations ; and as the cure, where I have been concerned, has been wholly
 “ committed to it, without the addition of any medicine, or even regimen, excepting
 “ what is described in the printed directions, or what the inventor himself has ordered ;
 “ some fair opportunities have occurred of observing it’s effects ; to which, and to every
 “ other information that could be obtained, with a mind open to conviction, I have
 “ carefully attended. But in this, as in all our former researches, the evidence has
 “ been unfavourable to the fame of the *Powder.*

“ In some instances it has occasioned fainting, convulsions, and other violent sym-
 “ ptoms, which terrified those who gave it. In all which I have seen it has proved
 “ unsuccessful, though, in some cases, the cure has afterwards been accomplished by
 “ safer methods ; and in those where it was too late to use any other remedies, the sick
 “ have died, although it was probable they might have recovered by a different manage-
 “ ment, which has succeeded in similar instances ; but from an abused and misplaced
 “ confidence, has been too often set aside to make way for this favourite medicine.”

Observations on Antimony, page 92, 93.

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medicines,

medicines; has possibly betrayed me into an improper warmth of expression (perhaps not altogether so prudent for one in my present situation of life), which I flatter myself will be excused by the humane and sensible part of the Public, when it is considered, that the preservation of the lives of my fellow-creatures was the principal incitement to it.

I COULD here expatiate amply on the use of bleeding, blisters, antimonials, and other potent remedies in acute diseases; but the present unhappy occasion requiring a speedy publication of this little production, my other avocations will not permit me at present to think of it. But if I should be blessed with health and opportunity, I may possibly, at some future period, trouble the Public with my sentiments on these important means of relief and recovery; and endeavour to shew, upon rational and consistent principles, that these very powerful medical applications require the clearest ideas of the causes and progress of diseases, to render them truly useful in the healing art.

I HAVE now finished the relation of this unhappy case, and those observations to which it has given rise; and I apprehend, that the hints which I have thrown out on the
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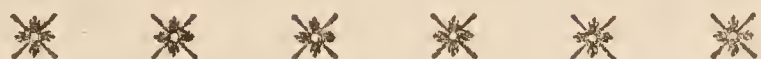
too early application of powerful remedies, in the beginning of acute diseases, cannot be wholly improper. I have, indeed, been the more stimulated to this publication by the opinion of some of my friends; who in the relation of the case, requested me to make it public for the general good, and with a view to prevent such unfortunate incidents in future. I was at first rather averse to this; but as Dr. GOLDSMITH's death is now become a subject of general conversation, and various reports have been propagated respecting my conduct, during my attendance upon him, I hope the Public will do me the justice to believe, that no vain desire of appearing in the character of an Author, has occasioned the publication of these pages; but that a solicitude to give a just representation of the beginning of the Doctor's illness, and to prevent, as much as in my power, the indiscriminate and injudicious application of any very powerful medicine, were the only motives that induced me to submit this to the inspection of the Public.

As these were really the motives to which this publication owes its origin, I hope my readers will be sufficiently equitable and candid to give them their full force; and if they do this, and endeavour to profit by the relation of this unfortunate case, and the few plain rules which I have laid
down

down to prevent an improper treatment of persons in those of a similar nature, I shall think myself abundantly rewarded ; and that any trouble with which this appeal to the Public may have been attended, has been much more than sufficiently compensated.

BEFORE I conclude, it may not be improper to observe, (as a kind of apology for some particulars which are before related to have passed between me and Dr. GOLDSMITH.) that he was bred a Physician, and therefore it was natural to converse with him on the subject of his disorder in a medical manner ; but his attention had been so wholly absorbed by polite literature, that it prevented him from making any great progress in medical studies. As an elegant Writer, he will always be held in the highest esteem by all persons of true taste. His *Traveller* and *Deserted Village* are deservedly numbered amongst the best poetical productions of the present age ; and some of his essays, and other pieces, are very advantageously distinguished by genuine wit and native humour. It should also be remembered, that he was as amiable as a man, as excellent as a writer. His humanity and generosity greatly exceeded the narrow limits of his fortune ; and those who were no judges of the literary merit
of

of the Author, could not but love the Man for that benevolence by which he was so strongly characterised.



N. B. As my late respected and ingenious friend, Dr. GOLDSMITH, was pleased to honour Dr. Cogan and myself with his patronage and assistance IN THE UNDERTAKING FOR THE RECOVERY OF PERSONS APPARENTLY DEAD BY DROWNING, AND OTHER SUDDEN ACCIDENTS, now on the point of being established in this kingdom; I think I cannot shew a greater proof of my esteem for the deceased, than by applying the profits of this Publication (if any should arise to an institution, the design of which was favoured with his approbation.

F I N I S.

